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FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:
DONALD R. NICHOLS (202) 874-6450

MINT GOES NATIONAL WITH RETAIL PROGRAM FOR OLYMPIC COINS

**- Reaches Agreements with Three Retailers, Sports Merchandiser,
Jewelry Firm, Consumer Products Brokers -**

Washington, D.C. -- The U.S. Mint has expanded its retail sales initiative coast-to-coast through new agreements with three retailers, a national jewelry company, a sports marketer, and a four-firm consortium of consumer products brokers to sell 1995-96 Coins of the Atlanta Centennial Olympic Games.

The three new official retailers of the 1995-96 Olympic Coin Program are Mercantile Department Stores, Kroger Grocery and the Navy & Marine Corps Exchange System. They join Wal-Mart, J.C. Penney and the Army-Air Force Exchange System, which became official Olympic coin retailers in March.

Cincinnati-based Mercantile Stores will initiate Olympic coin sales in its Southeast stores and potentially carry the coins in each of its five operating divisions. Kroger's will feature the coins at 134 of its Atlanta area food-and-drug combination stores, and the Navy & Marine Corps Exchange System will sell the coins in its December catalogue and at 218 facilities at military installations worldwide.

The retailers will stock self-standing displays specially designed by the Mint's Olympic marketing task force. Displays hold 216 "blister packs" containing Olympic basketball or baseball clad coins alongside an Olympic Games pin. The stores also will carry gold and silver coins in "Olympic Games premium packs," specially designed secure counter displays. The added-value packages contain individual Olympic silver dollars with a program that outlines events, dates, and stadium locations of Olympic venues.

Florida-based Ravel Jewelry Company, a national manufacturer and mass marketer, will market gold and silver Olympic coins across the country to jewelry stores and retail store jewelry departments for purchase by the public. Ravel's clients include Zale's, Marshall's, Macy's, T.J. Max and numerous others.

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In addition, Trigon Sports, a Virginia supplier of premium incentives to sports marketers nationwide, will purchase gold, silver and clad Olympic coins and sell them as premium incentives to its clients, which include national governing bodies that oversee individual Olympic sports.

Hynes Sales Company will head the group of four consumer products brokers selling Olympic coins nationwide to wholesale and retail firms such as drug stores, mail order houses, mass merchandisers, specialty stores, housewares stores and department stores. The consortium will mobilize a sales force of 1,000 professionals to market, merchandise and distribute Olympic coins.

Hynes will sell through its network in 21 Northeast, Southeast and Southwest states. Its partners in the marketing consortium--Pankow Associates, The Keystone Organization and Morgan & Sampson Pacific--fill in the Mint's national atlas of Olympic coin retail coverage. Pankow, in Skokie, IL, will sell to clients in 13 Midwestern states. Keystone operates in New York State and the New York City metro area. California-based Morgan & Sampson will sell Olympic coins to wholesale and retail clients in 13 Western states, including Alaska and Hawaii.

"These agreements carry us several steps closer to the goal of putting Olympic coins within reach of every household in the country," said Mint Director Philip N. Diehl. "Americans who might never have considered buying Olympic coins now will see them in grocery stores, convenience stores, drug stores, jewelry stores, department stores and other places they visit every day."

He added, "These agreements and others under discussion are very promising for Olympic coin sales. What's more, we're creating a lasting retail sales presence that expands sales possibilities for other coin programs."

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